

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OC-06

CCO-00 SCA-01 SY-05 /079 W
----- 024110

R 061220Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4036

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0526

KHARTOUM/MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: JULY 4TH WEEKEND IN ASMARA: FIREWORKS COME WITH THE
TERRITORY

REF: ASMARA 0522 (DTG 021335Z JUL 76)

1. IN AN EFFORT TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE AND A CONSISTENTLY
NON-PARTISAN POSITION IN THE ERITREAN SITUATION, THE CONGEN DID
NOT HOST THE TRADITIONAL NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION. THEREBY, WE
AVOIDED THE LIKELY EMBARRASMENT OF THE MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITIES
DECLINING THE INVITATION, OR, IF THEY ATTENDED, TOO CLOSE AN
IDENTIFICATION WITH THEM. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, A PARTY FOR AMERICANS
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AT KAGNEW. DURING THE MORNING OF JULY 4, SEVERAL DOZEN ETHIOPIAN

CASUALTIES WERE BROUGHT INTO THE HOSPITAL DIRECTLY ACROSS
FROM THE U.S.-OCCUPIED PORTION OF KAGNEW
TRACT ECHO, CASTING A
PALL OVER THE FESTIVITIES BEING HELD THERE.

2. ACCORDING TO VARIOUS REPORTS, IN THE EARLY MORNING OF JULY 4,
AN ETHIOPIAN MILITARY FORCE, INCLUDING ARMORED VEHICLES, WAS
AMBUSHED ON THE DECAMERE ROAD 15 KM FROM ASMARA. THE FORCE,
WHICH WAS SWEEPING THE AREA IN ADVANCE OF A SUPPLY CONVOY,
REPORTEDLY SUSTAINED HEAVY CASUALTIES. SECOND DIVISION HQ WAS
ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND BY 1800 HOURS AT LEAST A DOZEN
TRUCKLOADS OF TROOPS LEFT THE HQ TO THE CHEERS OF THEIR COMRADES,
"NO MORE ELF". ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 4, THERE WAS HEAVY FIRING
IN THE AREA SOUTH OF ASMARA, BUT NO FIRING IN THE CITY ITSELF.
ON JULY 5, TRUCKLOADS OF TROOPS WERE OBSERVED RETURNING TO ASMARA.
IT IS NOW BELIEVED THAT THESE TROOPS HAD BEEN USED AS REINFORCE-
MENTS FOR THE PERIMETER DEFENCE OF ASMARA. THE SUPPLY CONVOY
REPORTEDLY DID ARRIVE IN DECAMERE THE EVENING OF JULY 5.

3. THE CONVOYS BRINGING FOOD FROM MASSAWA (REFTEL) WERE SUSPENDED
OVER THE WEEKEND AS A RESULT OF THE FIGHTING. THE CONVOY THAT
LEFT ASMARA JULY 2 RETURNED THE NEXT DAY, BUT TO DATE NONE OF
THE FOOD HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET TO ALLEVIATE
CURRENT SHORTAGES. CONVOYS ARE EXPECTED TO RESUME WHEN FRESH
ESCORT FORCES CAN BE ORGANIZED.
WAUCHOPE

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